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BIOGRAPHY.

EXTRACT FROM A LATE EUROPEAN PUBLICATION.

IN his manner of living, Mr. Hawkins carried economy to a blameable exceſs; but this extended chiefly to *ſmall* objects, as the large ſums which he gave away in his life-time, not only to public charities, but to his relations, abundantly prove. In the early circumſtances of his life, rigid economy was abſolutely requiſite; and before he acquired a fortune, his habits were confirmed. Buſineſs conſtituted the chief pleaſure of his life; and his few hours of relaxation were devoted to that friendly ſocial intercourſe, which created little or no expenſe: he was wholly exempt from a taſte for luxury, or oſtentatious parade. During his life-time, he gave away larger ſums in charity, than was known even to his moſt intimate friends. His object was *to do good*, not *to acquire fame*. His donations to public charites were princely. He contributed 40,000*l.* three *per cent.* ſtock to the fund for Proteſtant Charity-Schools in Ireland; and 10,000*l.* three *per cent.* to create a fund for Annuities to the Widows of Naval Officers; and large ſums to various other exiſting inſtitutions.

HE gave 10,000*l.* to the Society in Scotland for propagating Chriſtian Knowledge.

HAVING deſtined this ſum to promote the intereſt of religion in general, and the Proteſtant cauſe in particular, he conſulted his friend and relation, Iſaac Hawkins Browne, Eſq. M. P. as to the charitable inſtitution moſt likely to promote theſe great objects.

Mr. H. Browne was nearly connected, by marriage, with the late Thomas Earl of Kinnoull, for many years the worthy and much reſpected Preſident of the Scottiſh Society; and from his Lordſhip had acquired the knowledge of that inſtitution, which he recommended to the attention of his generous Friend.

Mr. Hawkins was led, in conſequence, to inſtitute a particular inquiry into the hiſtory and conſtitution of that Society, the extent of its funds, the ſpecific objects of their deſtination, and the manner in which the buſineſs was conducted.

A correspondence was, of conſequence, at his deſire, carried on by the Rev. John Hepworth, Rector of Egginton, near Burton, and Maſter of the Free School there, with the Secretary of the Society, reſpecting the above points. The information wanted was given in the fulleſt and moſt unreſerved manner; and the reſult, according to Mr. Hepworth's report, gave entire ſatisfaction to his Employer.

The correſpondence had all along been carried on under the immediate inſpection of the Directors, and they were encouraged, by this aſſurance of its favourable iſſue, to hope for a conſiderable donation; but their moſt ſanguine expectations were far exceeded by the munificent gift, of which they ſoon afterwards received notice. In March, 1791, the Secretary received from Mr. Hepworth a deed, *conveyed to Iſaac Hawkins Browne, Eſq. M. P. in truſt, for the Society in Scotland for propagating Chriſtian Knowledge, the ſum of* 10,000l. *in the five* per cent. *ſtock annuities:* that truſt to continue in force for a few years, if the Society ſhould ſo incline; but with power to them to take the ſtock into their own hands, if they ſhould find it neceſſary.

The Society were perfectly willing that the truſt ſhould continue: they were conſcious of their own integrity; they had entire confidence in the uprightneſs and honour of the worthy Truſtee; and they willingly agreed to exhibit to him annually, for his own ſatisfaction, and that of the generous Donor, an account of the expenditure of the ſum beſtowed upon them. This, accordingly, was done for a ſhort period; at the expiration of which, both the Donor and the Truſtee were ſo much ſatisfied with the plan of management adopted, and ſteadily purſued by the Society, that the deed of truſt was cancelled, and the Society left to act according to their own diſcretion.

Deeply impreſſed with a ſenſe of gratitude to their generous, though unknown Benefactor, the Directors wrote, by their Secretary, to their worthy correſpondent, Mr. Hepworth (to whom the the Society were likewiſe indebted for a donation of 50*l.*), to requeſt, that if there was a portrait of his generous Friend,

Friend, a copy of it might be taken at their expenſe; and that if no ſuch portrait exiſted, he would employ his influence with him to ſit for one, that it might be ſuſpended in their Hall—a monument of gratitude, when no reaſon for concealment ſhould remain.

Mr. Hepworth returned for anſwer, that no portrait of his Friend had ever been taken, except one about ſixty years before, at the deſire of his mother; and that rather than ſit for another, he would double his benefaction.

With invincible perſeverance, Mr. Hawkins continued, during the remainder of his life, to keep himſelf concealed from the Society; and it was not till a conſiderable time after his death, that they were indebted for the knowledge of his name, to the worthy man who firſt made Mr. Hawkins acquainted with the exiſtence of their inſtitution.

Vanity has often, and not without reaſon, been aſcribed to founders of hoſpitals and other charitable inſtitutions, with a view to hand down their names and fame to poſterity, too often to the utter neglect of their needy relations. But beſides what has been already ſtated, to ſhew that no ſuch motive exiſted in the mind of Mr. Hawkins, it is to be obſerved, that to his relations he acted a generous part—much he gave to them during his life; and, at his death, bequeathed to them all, ample legacies, correſponding to the degrees of their propinquity.

To extreme old age, Mr. Hawkins retained his judgment, and a conſiderable meaſure of bodily ſtrength. The fortune which he left behind him was great. He bequeathed to his co-heirs at law, the property which he received from his elder brother; deviſed numerous legacies; and left the remainder, which probably amounted to 150,000*l.* or more, in truſt to Iſaac Hawkins Browne, Eſq. and the Rev. Thomas Giſborne, his relations and friends, to be diſpoſed of by them in charitable uſes—a truſt which they immediately reſolved to execute, agreeably to what they conceived to have been his intention. They have now nearly fulfilled the duty with which they were ſo honourably charged, as far as they have been permitted by the heirs at law, who commenced a ſuit in Chancery, to ſet aſide the will. This was terminated by a compromiſe, under the ſanction of the Lord Chancellor, by which the Executors were obliged to relinquiſh near two-thirds of the large ſum bequeathed to them.

Iſaac Hawkins died at Burton upon Trent, the 8th of February 1800, in the ninety-firſt year of his age.

An eſtimate of his character may be formed from the few, but important facts above ſtated. Had he devoted the large ſums which, during his life-time, he gave away in charity, to

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ſpendid hoſpitality, his popularity would have been greater; but whether, by that means, he would have done ſo much good, is a queſtion which is left to the wiſe and reflecting part of mankind to decide. As he lived a long and laborious life, ſo it muſt be allowed, that he lived and died a friend and benefactor to human ſociety.

Ever ſince his death, the Directors of the Society have been ambitious of paying a juſt tribute to the memory of their generous and long unknown Benefactor; but it was not till now, in conſequence of recent and authentic information, that they had it in their power to diſcharge this debt of gratitude.

For the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine.

EXAMINATION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

Is it neceſſary for an Eccleſiaſtical Council to examine a Candidate previouſly to Ordination?

THE following are ſome of the reaſons, which induce me to anſwer in the affirmative.

First reaſon. *Scripture is decidedly in favour of examinations.* Paul ſays to Timothy, *Lay hands ſuddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's ſins.* The true meaning of this caution is undoubtedly given in the following paraphraſe of Doddridge. "As it is a matter of ſo great importance to the Chriſtian church, what perſons are admitted to miniſter in it; I charge thee, that thou lay hands ſuddenly and raſhly on no man, to ſet him apart for that ſacred truſt, before his qualifications have been fully examined and thoroughly approved. Neither make thyſelf partaker in the ſins of others; as thou wilt certainly do, if thou art the means of bringing thoſe into the miniſtry, whom thou mighteſt have diſcovered to be unworthy men." The apoſtle's caution ſhould keep miniſters not only from introducing into the ſacred office men who are not qualified, but from introducing even thoſe who are qualified without ſuitable inquiry reſpecting their qualifications. What the requiſite qualifications are we learn from the ſame apoſtle. *A biſhop muſt be blameleſs, the huſband of one wife, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, holding faſt the faithful word, &c.* This particular deſcription of a Biſhop's character is deſigned not only as a ſtandard to which every miniſter ought himſelf to conform, but as a directory for thoſe, who are concerned in ordaining others. This was the ſpecial deſign of the deſcription, as appears beyond all doubt from the connexion. *For this cauſe,* ſays Paul to Titus, *I left thee in Crete, that thou ſhouldſt ſet in order the things which are wanting, and ordain elders in every city,*

city, as I had appointed thee. Immediately upon this he gives Titus the deſcription of a Biſhop, which is nothing leſs than giving him inſtruction what characters to ordain. And this is tacitly directing him not to ordain any man, without previouſly obtaining ſatisfactory evidence, that he poſſeſſes the character deſcribed. Now whatever private ſatisfaction miniſters may have reſpecting the character of a candidate, it is neceſſary, when they come to act as a council, that the evidence of his character be exhibited before them in their public capacity, ſo that their public act in ordaining may be attended, in public view, with the reaſons which juſtify it.

SECOND reaſon for examinations. *The general practice of enlightened men in caſes far leſs important.* A young man cannot be admitted a member of College, without a ſtrict examination, and evidence from ſubſtantial teſtimonials, that he is a ſuitable character to be admitted. A man muſt paſs through a very long and minute examination before our medical ſocieties, in order to his obtaining licence to practiſe the art of healing. A man cannot be admitted an attorney, without proof that he has made thoſe acquiſitions, which qualify him for the office. Our laws wiſely direct, that the loweſt claſs of ſchool-maſters ſhall not be employed without inquiry into their qualifications. And ſhall men be introduced into the miniſtry, an office infinitely more important than any other, with little or no attention to their qualifications! Shall the children of this world be wiſer in this reſpect too, than the children of light? Shall they guard their temporal intereſts more ſtrictly, than Chriſtians do the intereſts of God's kingdom?

THIRD reaſon. *It was the practice of the Chriſtian church in primitive times.* "In the firſt ages of Chriſtianity a ſerious examination always preceded the ordination. Before any perſon could be regularly elected to any clerical office in the church, the electors and ordainers were obliged to examine him concerning his faith, his morals, and condition in life. The perſon elected was obliged to anſwer to certain queſtions of doctrine. He was obliged to ſubſcribe to a body of articles, or confeſſion of faith at the time of his ordination. The examination of his morals was very ſtrict." See Bingham's Antiquities of the Chriſtian Church.

The ſame is true of our excellent forefathers. The ſaying of Calvin reſpecting primitive miniſters may be in a meaſure applied to the firſt paſtors of New-England Churches; "whereas they underſtood that they engaged in a moſt important matter," (when they undertook to ordain miniſters) "they durſt attempt nothing, but with great reverence and carefulneſs."

FOURTH reaſon. *The very nature of the tranſactions in which an ordaining council are engaged.* Previouſly to ordination, they commonly

monly vote their ſatisfaction with the qualifications of the candidate, and their readineſs to proceed to ordination. How can they by vote expreſs their ſatisfaction with the qualifications of the candidate, when thoſe qualifications have not been the ſubject of inquiry? How can they conſiſtently ſignify their readineſs to proceed to the ſolemn act of ordination, when they have not attended to the natural, reaſonable, and important queſtion, *Is the candidate properly qualified for ordination?* Is it not preſumption to take it for granted, that every one, who offers himſelf for ordination, is fit for the miniſtry? And as to the act of ordination, how can a council ſolemnly ſet apart to the ſacred office a man, whoſe preparation for that office has undergone no examination? How can they embrace one as a brother and fellow labourer in the vineyard of Chriſt, and recommend him as ſuch to the people, when, as a council, they have no evidence that he believes the goſpel, or loves the Redeemer? Without a ſolemn and ſtrict examination, there can be no propriety or conſiſtency in the proceedings of a council from firſt to laſt.

FIFTH reaſon. *If the practice of examining candidates be ſet aſide, the churches will be in the greateſt danger of being impoſed upon and miſguided by unqualified miniſters.* If there be no inquiry reſpecting the learning, the doctrinal belief, and the perſonal religion of candidates, thoſe, whoſe belief is extremely erroneous, and who are deſtitute of learning and religion, may without difficulty obtain ordination. As ſoon as we deny the neceſſity of examination, and give up the principle on which it ſtands, we open a door for the admiſſion of the worſt characters to the ſacred office. By ordaining even good men without examination, we implicitly engage to ordain all who apply. To omit examinations is to ſay practically, that *character*, whether moral or literary, is not of eſſential conſequence in goſpel miniſters.

SIXTH reaſon. *The practice of thoroughly examining candidates previouſly to ordination has many advantages.* It has a deſirable influence on the council, calling up their attention anew to the great truths of the goſpel and the intereſts of Chriſt's kingdom, and thus preparing them to engage with a proper ſpirit in ſuch public tranſactions. If the candidate give evidence of being well qualified for the miniſtry, it prepares them to embrace him with cordial affection, and to live with him in the moſt endearing and happy friendſhip. The practice is ſalutary in its tendency with reference to the people, with whom the candidate is connected. To know that he was not ordained raſhly, but after long and prayerful examination, was found well qualified for the miniſtry, would naturally diſpoſe them to receive benefit from his labours. This information would prepare the way for his uſefulneſs and acceptance not only among his own people,

ple, but in every place, where he ſhould occaſionally preach the goſpel. The effect of the practice would be ſerviceable with reference to thoſe who contemplate the miniſtry as their profeſſion; while its direct influence would be to keep unqualified men from ſeeking to be introduced into the ſacred office, it would happily excite thoſe, who are in any meaſure qualified for the miniſtry, to greater diligence and prayer in completing their preparation.

The SEVENTH reaſon for it is, *that there is no reaſon againſt it.* They who oppoſe examinations ground their oppoſition on a variety of pretences. One is, that the candidate has been publicly educated and received a degree, and that his outward conduct has been regular and reſpectable. But a collegiate education does not give every one even a tolerable acquaintance with common ſcience. College cannot impart genius. Many leave College as they entered it, "*with ſkulls that cannot teach and will not learn.*" If graduates are learned, they may be deſtitute of common morality. If their outward conduct ſhould happen to be regular and blameleſs, they may, notwithſtanding, be ignorant of Chriſtianity, erroneous in their views of religion, and at the greateſt diſtance from experimental godlineſs, and from all the moſt important miniſterial qualifications.

Another pretence is, that it is ſufficient for the candidate merely to ſay, *he believes the Holy Scriptures;* and that no further inquiry is neceſſary. But if upon examination it ſhould appear, that, although he profeſſes to believe the Bible, he rejects its centents, his profeſſion would deſerve little credit.

Another pretence is, that, as there is ſuch difference of ſentiment among miniſters, it is beſt to avoid diſputes and difficulties by keeping out of ſight every queſtion relative to ſentiment. Is ſuch a pretence ſufficiently rational and manly to deſerve conſideration? Is it any more than ſaying, *becauſe we differ in our views, let us put out our eyes, and not ſee at all? Let us act in the dark, leſt, if we ſhould come to the light, we ſhould not agree?* Let us not know each other, leſt we diſeſteem each other?

It is ſaid, that a minute and rigid examination proves to the candidate a ſtrong temptation to diſſemble, and that, on this account, the practice of examination ought to be rejected. I anſwer, upon the ſame principle the practice of requiring civil oaths ought to be rejected, becauſe it proves a temptation to perjury. The objection proves very much indeed.

Another objection is, *that it will take up time.* But is it not as well to uſe time in attending to the proper buſineſs of a council, as in converſing upon common news and airy trifles?

The laſt objection I ſhall conſider is, that the candidate will regard an examination, as a mark of diſeſteem and uncandid ſuſpicion.

ſuſpicion. But will a candidate, who is a man of judgment and noble feeling, think himſelf injured, becauſe the council aim conſcientiouſly to diſcharge their duty? If he is conſcious of requiſite qualifications, he muſt ſurely be willing his qualifications ſhould be known. And where is the man, truly humble and godly, who is not willing that others ſhould, when it is neceſſary, ſearch for his defects as well as for his virtues?

Such are the arguments of thoſe who oppoſe the examination of candidates. What ſolidity and weight theſe arguments have, I leave to the deciſion of the candid. And whether they who uſe theſe arguments do not conceal *an objection*, which has more influence than all others, I refer to their own deciſion. Honeſty is the beſt policy for church as well as ſtate.

Here a query ariſes; *How far ſhould the examination extend?* The beſt anſwer I can give is, that it ſhould extend as far as the eſſentials of the miniſterial character. What theſe eſſentials are let the infallible pen of the apoſtle determine. He treats the ſubject amply in his epiſtles to Timothy and Titus. Is it eſſential, that a miniſter be a man of information? Then inquiry ſhould be made concerning his information. Is it eſſential, that a miniſter believe the doctrines of the Bible, or as the apoſtle expreſſes it, that he *hold faſt the faithful word?* Then inquiry ſhould be made concerning his belief. Is it eſſential, that a miniſter be a regenerate man, a penitent, a ſaint? Every proper method ſhould be taken to diſcover, whether he be ſuch a character. Is it eſſential that he be prudent, blameleſs, apt to teach, &c.? Inquiry ſhould be made concerning theſe qualifications. Is it requiſite, that he ſhould know how to deal with ſouls in various caſes, what directions to give, what remedies to adminiſter? He ſhould, then, be queſtioned as to the proper treatment of ſouls in various caſes; as they, who ſeek for licence to practiſe the healing art, are queſtioned concerning the treatment of human diſeaſe according to its various ſymptoms. What work is ſo intereſting as that of a Paſtor? And is it a matter of no conſequence who undertakes it?

CLOSING REMARKS.

1. If the neceſſity of faithfully examining candidates is ſo clear, and its importance ſo great; then whenever we are called to act in councils, we ſhould not be deterred from acting faithfully by fear of man. We ſhould not be deterred by dread of reproach, nor by love of popularity. "Neither friendſhip, nor compaſſion, nor intereſt, nor importunity," ſays Dr. Smith, "ſhould move us to bring any into the church, who is not, as we firmly

firmly believe in our conſcience, in every reſpect duly qualified for its ſervice. Friendſhip for any man, in this reſpect, is enmity to God. Compaſſion to an individual is cruelty to the community." We ſhould behave ourſelves like men, like Chriſtians, like miniſters of King Jeſus. Remembering that the intereſts of his church are infinitely important, we ſhould faithfully purſue them, willingly ſacrificing every worldly, ſelfiſh object for Chriſt's ſake; and thinking it enough to have the honour of faithful miniſters, the honour which cometh from God, whether we have the honour which cometh from man or not.

2. Thoſe miniſters who, in councils, oppoſe examinations, aſſume what does not belong to them. It is the right of every member of a council, to uſe all proper methods to obtain ſatisfaction reſpecting the candidate. It is the right, and the duty of delegates, as well as of miniſters. Now whatever private ſatisfaction miniſters may have from perſonal acquaintance with the candidate, it is rarely the caſe, that delegates have any ſuch ſatisfaction. Shall they be required to act with blind, implicit confidence in miniſters? Shall they be deprived of the ſatisfaction, which a free and thorough examination might afford? Shall they be kept from aſking, and from hearing others aſk queſtions relative to the religious views and ſentiments of him, whom they are called to ordain? This would be an imperious contempt of delegates. It would be a palpable infringement of the privilege of churches.

How great is the guilt of thoſe, who oppoſe examinations! They are remiſs and eaſy in admitting to the miniſtry ſuch, as ought to have neither lot nor part in this matter. They do much to promote error and deluſion among the people, who look up to them as guides, and have no ſuſpicion, that they will ordain men who are unqualified to preach the goſpel. They are in effect partakers of other men's ſins. They are reſponſible for all the defects, errors, and hurtful influence of thoſe, whom they remiſsly introduce. As miniſters keep the door of the ſanctuary, they muſt anſwer to God, and to the ſouls of men, for ſuch as they unwarrantably let in. Alas, how ſunk is the credit and authority of councils; how do our churches lie mourning in the duſt; how are miniſters divided, and their influence dwindled away almoſt to nothing, through the want of vigilance and fidelity in thoſe, who have the keys of Chriſt's kingdom.

Finally, there is reaſon to think the moſt faithful miniſters come ſhort of their duty in this reſpect. Who is ſufficiently affectionate, patient, laborious, diſcerning, and prayerful in examining thoſe, who are candidates for ordination? And ſhall we fall even below thoſe, who come ſhort of duty? Shall we deſert thoſe, who, in this evil day, aim to be faithful to their

truſt? Shall we go over to the ſide of thoſe, who are not only lax in principle and ſupine in the diſcharge of the paſtoral office, but are the moſt cumberſome, oppreſſive load, which lies upon the ſhoulders of the miniſtry?

NEANISKOS.

N. B. *Are not thoſe miniſters willing to examine candidates, who are willing to diſplay their own theory? And are not thoſe miniſters averſe from examining candidates, who for certain reaſons are averſe at preſent from diſplaying their own tenets? Let facts determine.*

APOSTASY IN PROFESSORS OF RELIGION.

THERE have been always many profeſſors of religion (and great ones too) deſtitute of grace. The church has been impoſed upon by ſuch perſons, in all ages: for it has admitted numbers of them to its communion. Nay, the apoſtles themſelves, though endowed with extraordinary gifts, were frequently deceived by them. They ordained Nicholas a deacon; Demas was the companion of St. Paul; Hymeneus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes were highly reſpected by him. The deception laſted, in ſome inſtances for a ſhorter, in others for a longer time; and, in many inſtances, was probably never diſcovered: from whence we may infer, That a mere profeſſor may ſpeak and act in ſuch a way as to impoſe upon the moſt judicious and diſcerning Chriſtians; he may poſſeſs great gifts, and be called perhaps to the miniſtry, and made uſeful.

I apprehend that mere profeſſors are not *always* aware of their hopocriſy. It is a ſin that lies deep, and works much in ſecret. A deſigning hypocrite is undoubtedly conſcious of hypocriſy; yet many are fatally deceived thereby, who are not at all ſuſpicious of their danger: they have ſomething like religion,—feelings which reſemble thoſe of the people of God: they have the exact counterfeit of grace; and as they have never experienced the *reality*, they are the leſs able to diſcover that it is only the counterfeit. Or they may play the hypocrite, deſignedly at firſt, till God is provoked to puniſh them with judicial blindneſs; making them fall miſerable victims to their own hypocriſy.

I think, however, there is frequently ſomething in theſe perſons, calculated to awaken a ſuſpicion of their ſincerity; yet not always. When nothing ſuſpicious appears, I believe it is commonly attributable to one or other of theſe cauſes. There is a natural amiableneſs of diſpoſition, or agreeableneſs of manners,

ners, which appears more beautiful and lovely than grace itself, when the temper is rugged and the manners coarse. There is a natural warmth of feeling and affection, which looks like love to God and zeal for his glory; and there is a designing head and a dissembling heart, which uses religion merely as an instrument to promote its personal and worldly interests. Frequently, however, there is something which marks them for doubtful characters, and, in most instances, of notorious declension or apostasy. They like to talk about doctrinal subjects much better than about experimental and practical; and when it happens that they converse upon them, it is with reference to others; seldom to themselves. Their conversation is rather dry than savoury and profitable. There is something in their manner inconsistent with the Spirit of Christ. An attentive observer may perceive, that Self is too prominent; either Self-conceit or Self-interest. Their religion seems more for shew than use. If you catch them off their guard in private, they are not the same men that they are in public; and their good qualities are partial, not universal; the offspring of some naturally amiable dispositions,—not of sanctifying grace.

There are several causes which may induce people to profess religion, and make them appear like converted persons; and, so long as these causes continue to operate, the appearance of religion is maintained; but, when they cease, declension and apostasy take place.

The children of pious parents are frequently (and ought always to be) instructed in the doctrines of grace from their infancy; and restrained from bad company and sinful practices: but when the parents die, or the children, being grown up, become their own masters and mistresses, they forsake religion; and we discover, that the pleasant appearances in their childhood and youth were the effects merely of parental authority,—not of divine grace. Men are frequently placed in situations in which they have no temptation to apostatize; but the reverse. Presently, however, the world offers something more flattering to their pride, or more tempting to their interest; and then they follow Demas. Affliction occasions many to profess religion. Severe affliction, especially if it meets with an affectionate temper, and is accompanied with convictions of sin, renders the conversation and amusements of the world tasteless and insipid. Sinners are poor comforters. They find the hearts of Christians tender and sympathizing,—their conversations soothing and comfortable: they choose, therefore, Christians for their companions, and diligently attend upon the means of instruction. But when time has taken off the edge of their grief, the sympathy of Christians becomes less needful,

needful, and converſation leſs agreeable; the amuſements of the world acquire a new reliſh; and preſently the reins are thrown looſe on the neck of Gaiety and Diſſipation.

The ſubject will afford us two or three uſeful remarks:—

1ſt, The apoſtaſy of profeſſors ought not to ſhake our faith in the goſpel. It ſhould make us jealous of ourſelves, and ſtimulate us to diligent ſelf-examination; it ſhould teach us our own weakneſs, and the abſolute need we have of divine grace to keep us;—but it ſhould not lower our opinion of the excellency of religion, or of the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes. We ſhould judge of the goſpel by what it is in itſelf, and by the noble effects it produces in true believers; and not diſeſteem it becauſe pretenders to religion act like the reſt of the world.

2d, It preſſes upon us the neceſſity of ſelf-examination. Diligent ſelf-examination is attended with great advantages to all:—the ſinner diſcovers more clearly his character—and the Chriſtian his need of preſerving grace.

3d, It teaches us the neceſſity of being entirely and unreſervedly given up to God. "My ſon, give me thine heart!" The ſmalleſt reſerve will prove fatal. One ſin, and that perhaps a ſecret ſin; a ſin of the mind, a diſpoſition or affection contrary to the goſpel, has maintained the life and power of ſin in the ſoul, and led to a gradual but total apoſtaſy. "He who does not ſeek to be univerſally holy, is not ſincerely holy;" and without godly ſincerity there can be no perſeverance in religion.

W. W.

EXPERIENCE OF MISS P——.

I REMEMBER to have been under ſerious impreſſions as early as ſix or ſeven years of age. But nothing very remarkable till I was nearly ſixteen. At that time I imagined I took great ſatisfaction in reading Mrs. Row's Devout Exerciſes of the Heart. I thought I had ſimilar feelings and was making conſiderable advances in religion. About that time I heard a ſermon: the preacher in the cloſe of the diſcourſe addreſſed youth and children in a very pathetic manner. It had a very great effect upon me, (as I thought) I felt my affections raiſed to a great height in love to God and Chriſt, and contemplations on the joys of heaven. I thought I took great delight in ſecret prayer. But my ſerioufneſs did not laſt long; it was like the morning cloud and early dew, which ſoon paſſeth away. I became ſo ſtupid in a few months, as wholly to neglect ſecret prayer. When I was 17 I attended a dancing ſchool. This

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nurſery of wickedneſs put an end to all my ſerioufneſs. I do not remember to have had a check of conſcience for the three months which I attended. I felt perfectly at liberty to ridicule religion, and the profeſſors of it. I can hardly forbear warning parents, and thoſe who have the care of children, to be particularly careful to keep them from ſuch places of amuſement, where the Holy Spirit ſeldom if ever comes. I believe dancing has a moſt powerful influence to diſſipate the mind and harden the heart againſt every thing of a ſerious nature. Some have ſuppoſed *dancing* to be an *innocent amuſement*. But how can any thing be innocent which the religion of the goſpel totally diſcards? When the Divine Spirit takes up his abode in the ſoul, when the heart is renewed and ſanctified by divine grace, inſtead of reſorting to an aſſembly room to mingle with the gay; the ſoul loves to retire to the cloſet, to pour forth its deſires into the boſom of its God and Saviour; or go to the houſe of God with thoſe who keep holy days; and ſay with the ſweet pſalmiſt of Iſrael, I had rather be a *door-keeper* in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in the *tents of wickedneſs*.

Some time in the courſe of a year afterwards, my former convictions were rouſed up again by hearing a ſermon, and the ſpeaker's making particular inquiry into my ſpiritual ſtate. I then realized in ſome degree, that I was a ſinner, and expoſed to puniſhment. But I had no juſt views of the nature of ſin, or of the holy law of God. I ſuppoſed I could pray myſelf into favour with God. I thought the good work was already begun, and all that was neceſſary to complete it, was to continue in prayer and avoid gay company. I often felt my heart much engaged in prayer, and thought I was pleaſed with the character of God and Chriſt. But I have reaſon to fear it was my own character, and ſuppoſed high attainments in religion that ſo much excited my complacency. Again my fears ſubſided, and I made an excuſe of this kind, "that I was in as fair a way for heaven as people in general; and if there was ſuch a thing as a change of heart, poſſibly I might experience it at ſome future time." So for ſeveral months things went on ſmoothly. But I humbly truſt God in mercy to my periſhing ſoul rouſed me from my ſtupidity by ſeveral ſermons preached by one, who I believe is a faithful ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, from 1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God," &c. When I heard the text named, my enmity was excited to a conſiderable degree, to think the doctrine of election would be brought into view. I always felt greatly oppoſed to any who believed it; and *wholly* diſcarded it myſelf. I attended cloſely to the firſt diſcourſe, and before I aroſe from my ſeat was convinced the doctrine was true. But my heart roſe againſt it, I felt that I was a ſinner, and that it was not likely that I was one of the

the elect, and that there was no such thing as escaping out of the hands of so terrible a God! My convictions continued several months, though not so pungent all the time; till I heard another discourse upon the day of judgment. The solemnities of the scene were brought to view in a very striking manner. That, together with the 88th Hymn of the 1st Book, seemed to alarm *all* my fears. I then felt that I was not only a sinner, but a great sinner; and that my former prayers and duties were an abomination in the sight of God. I realized in some measure that I must have truth in the inward parts, and that no false guises would shelter me in the day of God's wrath. I several times had temptations to make way with myself. But the thought that I should immediately drop into hell, deterred me from it. God appeared *great* and *terrible*. In the twilight of the evening as I was walking alone, this question arose in my mind: "What would become of me, if I should be called to appear in the judgment to-night?" My conscience answered, "you must appear on the *left hand!*" Time seemed short, and eternity just approaching. I felt myself standing on the crumbling verge of eternal ruin! Then, and not till then, it seemed perfectly just in God to cast me off forever. I thought I would throw myself at the feet of sovereign mercy, and let the Lord do as seemed him meet. I then gave up all hope of being saved by any of my own endeavours, and saw it must be of the sovereign grace of God. I felt disposed to fall into the hands of God, and let him dispose of me to his own glory; not knowing what he would do with me. I immediately felt my heart go out after God. The Saviour appeared altogether lovely. I could not hold my peace, though alone. I breathed out the feelings of my heart by saying, "O thou divine Saviour, O sweet and lovely Jesus, come and take up thine abode with me." When I returned to the house, as I entered the door, I heard some person singing a *dancing tune;* it seemed so dreadful, I could not endure it. I went directly out again. I felt afraid of any thing that would take away the sweetness I felt in my soul. But I had no idea it was religion I then enjoyed. I do not recollect that I once thought it was a change of heart. My comfort did not last long, not an hour. I then thought the Holy Spirit had done striving with me, as I did not feel distressed about my own salvation. I could not feel my former distress, and so I thought by my repeated rebellion I had grieved away the Holy Spirit. To be given up of God, seemed unspeakably dreadful. Thus I continued for nearly a fortnight, at which time God was pleased, as I hope and trust, to set my soul at liberty. One evening as I was returning home from a visit, all at once the divine character appeared so glorious, and the way of salvation by a Media-

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nor ſo ſuitable and proper, that the ſweet view I had of divine things filled my heart with joy and peace that cannot be deſcribed. I thought I could ſee the divine wiſdom and goodneſs in every thing. "All things ſeemed full of God." I could not but wonder where I had been all my days, that I had never beheld God in the works of nature before. Every thing ſeemed new. The Bible appeared a new book, and I took great delight in reading it, eſpecially the Pſalms. Watts' Hymns and Pſalms were peculiarly ſweet. Thoſe whom I thought bore the image of Chriſt were pleaſant objects in my view. The doctrines of the goſpel *all* ſeemed to harmonize; and the *ſovereignty* of God ſeemed to be my *only* prop. I could then ſee that it was the electing love of God that had ſweetly forced me in. I uſed to retire to a grove of pines to pour out my deſires to God a number of times in a day. I felt as if God had been ſo gracious to my ſoul that I had nothing to aſk for ſelf, only to praiſe him for what he was *in* and *of* himſelf, and plead for poor ſinners.

"BORN OF GOD."

AS by the natural birth there is a foundation for new impreſſions and habits, therefore, when a perſon becomes the ſubject of holy exerciſes and habits, this change is termed a *birth*. The motto above aſſerts this birth to be of God, that it is effected by God. He is the Author, the moſt powerful agent. This birth is not effected by corporeal might, nor intellectual energy, by the caution of prudence, the meditations of philoſophy, nor the tremblings of terror; but by the power and Spirit of God. The fire of genius, and the blaze of ſcience are inadequate to ſuch an effect. It would be ſuperfluous, they are ſo numerous, to recite texts of ſcripture, which prove the ſubjects of the new birth to be born of God.

In this doctrine various ſects of Chriſtians profeſſedly unite, though really they are as oppoſite as froſt and fire. Hopkinſians, Arminians, Calviniſts, and Socinians build their hopes on divine influences. Dr. Prieſtly ſays, "there is a ſenſe in which all is effected by the influences of the Spirit." He alſo ſays, "there is but one agent in the univerſe." This, when applied to regeneration, may harmonize with the opinion of Calviniſts, that God is the only agent. The diſciples of Arminius encourage themſelves in expectation of divine influences to aſſiſt their *morally* good endeavours for new obedience.

Of another deſcription is a ſplendid galaxy of divines, who have for generations taught that regeneration is a *phyſical* change, in which men are *paſſive*. A word of reply to theſe opinions may

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be proper. To thoſe, who expect divine grace to aſſiſt their *morally* good endeavours for regeneration, we ſay, that till thoſe characters, which are "*only* evil and that *continually*" may at the ſame time be *good*, till eyes blind and ears deaf, can ſee and hear; till thoſe, who are dead, live and move, the doctrine of ſinners' morally good endeavours for regeneration muſt be feebly ſupported. If no ſuch endeavours exiſt, the idea of influences to aid thoſe endeavours is of courſe imaginary. More unreaſonable is it to ſuppoſe men *paſſive* in what God commands them to *do*. Wicked men are commanded to "make themſelves new hearts," to "convert," to "turn themſelves unto the Lord;" but if men are neceſſarily *paſſive* in this work, theſe commands mean nothing, or ſomewhat infinitely worſe. If men muſt unavoidably be paſſive, and yet are commanded to "awake," to "riſe," to "turn," to "work," it reminds one of him, who demanded brick without ſtraw. It may be ſaid that "the new birth is effected by Almighty power." But how does this prove that men are *paſſive?* We are alſo taught that the ſame Almighty power, which raiſed Chriſt from the dead, produces faith in believers; yet no one has inferred from this, that believers are paſſive in their faith. By his Almighty power God directs the volitions of men, yet men are not paſſive, but active in thoſe volitions. If regeneration were a *phyſical* change, there would be an addition to the natural powers. But no facts ſupport this. There is no phyſical depravity, therefore no phyſical change is needed. What phyſical power had the dwellers of Eden, not equally enjoyed by their children? A moral depravity there is, dreadful in its nature; but a phyſical change to remedy a moral depravity would be as unnatural as to apply a balſam to remove the vices of the heart, or to addreſs a moral argument to heal a broken bone. He who firſt ſuggeſted a phyſical change to relieve the moral evils of the heart might with the ſame propriety have written on the piety of a circle, and the vice of a triangle.

If it now be inquired *how* the Holy Spirit effects the work of regeneration, in what this operation is different from others, may it not be doubted whether any man can tell? "The wind bloweth where it liſteth; ye hear the ſound, but cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; ſo is every one, who is born of the Spirit."

Still may we not cautiouſly inquire, are not all hearts directed by God? Does he not turn every thought and inclination as rivers of water are turned? Did not he turn the Egyptians' hearts "to hate his people?" Does not the Pſalmiſt pray, "incline not my heart to any evil thing?" Does this imply that men are *paſſive* when directed by divine power? Does any one doubt its conſiſtency with free agency? Then may we not ſuppoſe

poſe that when God ceaſes to "incline to evil," to "lead men into temptation," to turn them to "hate his people," to "harden their hearts;" when he "puts his fear in their hearts," when he gives them a ſpirit of prayer, then are they born of God. As they have been dependent, they now continue dependent in the exèrciſe of a new heart. Neither grace nor holineſs, neither the ſaint nor ſinner, is independent. Both characters are equally dependent. The ſame power, for the ſame ultimate purpoſe, and with the ſame impartial benevolence, forms one veſſel to honour and another to diſhonour. The Spirit of God with the ſame wiſdom raiſed up Pharaoh to deſtroy, and Paul to ſave immortal men. Nor need this alarm the reflecting mind. The pious readily grant that God gives them their gratitude, their love, and their devotion, yet they believe themſelves voluntary and active in thoſe duties; they believe themſelves the proper ſubjects of praiſe and reward. On the ſame ground, why may not the wicked be equally dependent and equally proper ſubjects of blame and puniſhment? In both caſes they are dependent, and active, and accountable.

A plauſible objection occurs. "If all thoughts and exerciſes are produced by the Spirit of God, as really as regeneration, then why is *this* ſo repeatedly called the work of God?" Anſwer. It is congenial with the ſtyle of Scripture, and the feelings of man, *more emphatically* to aſcribe to God events, which are ſingular and great, than thoſe, which are common and leſs affecting. Thus Scripture ſays, "the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon." But this does not prove, nor *imply*, but the voice of the Lord equally bends the pliant willow of the valley; it equally breathes in the gale, and thunders in the ſtorm. It is the ſame Spirit, who divides the Jordan, and forms the ſilent ripple on its ſurface, that reſtrains Paul at one time from violating the ceremonial law, and at another holds him back from perſecuting Jeſus Chriſt; yet the laſt event may be emphatically ſtyled the work of God.

May we not then humbly inquire whether the diſtinction between *common* and *ſpecial* influences is founded in truth? If by common influences be meant thoſe, which are generally and uſually enjoyed; if by ſpecial be meant thoſe, which are great and ſingular, the diſtinction is undoubtedly juſt; but if the diſtinction ſuppoſes a difference in the *nature* and *tendency* of the cauſe operating in the two caſes, its propriety may be doubted. The nature of the cauſe is the ſame, which forms the humble willow of Spitzbergen, and the lofty pine of New-England; and is not the nature of the cauſal influence the ſame, which reſtrains the wicked man by the force of his conſcience, and the ſanctified man by the goodneſs of his heart?

One important doctrine, the universal dependence of men, is directly impressed on the mind by the above remarks. The subject shows us, that all men, at all times, and in all circumstances, are equally dependent on God. Adam in paradise was as dependent as Daniel in the den of lions. Belshazzar, surrounded by his military lords, was as dependent as the three children in the fiery furnace. Saul, breathing out slaughter on his way to Damascus, was as dependent as Peter loaded with irons, and guarded by soldiers. The sinner is as dependent for his restraints, as the Christian for his virtues. Every man is as dependent for strength to walk, as for grace to pray; for power to get wealth, as for power to make him a new heart.

EUSEBIUS.

THE CONVERSION OF A FAMILY.

ABOUT the year 1712, a worthy and industrious family, of the name of ———, was settled at C. a village nearly in the centre of ——shire. In the parents, a moral character without reproach was blended with a strict, and perhaps superstitious, regard to the forms of devotion; but they were totally strangers to the religion of the heart. Their confessions were destitute of penitential sorrow, for they knew not the evil of sin; their petitions were mingled with no ardent desires, for they knew not the need nor the value of divine mercy; their praises were not enlivened by grateful love, for they had never learned to "account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." To be honest and sober, and to keep to their church, was all the religion they knew; and they were resolutely determined that they and their house would know no other; but God, who is rich in mercy, had determined otherwise.

In a few years the family became numerous; and, though several died in infancy, the parents, by the fruits of their industry, trained up six sons and four daughters. It became necessary to provide situations for the sons; and the second of them, about the year 1730, received a proposal to reside at C——, a market-town in the same county, with a person of considerable respectability, a member and a deacon of a Dissenting church. The religion of the proposed master formed the only objection to his service; this was over-ruled by other advantages, and the offer was accepted. At the youth's departure to his new situation, his father said to him, 'Son, you must now faithfully promise me never to enter the meeting-house at ——: on this condition, you go to your place.'—The son, without hesitation, accepted

accepted the condition, and made the required engagement. Fixed in his new reſidence, he ſoon reaped, in the confidence of his maſter, the juſt reward of his own diligence. The attachment was mutual; and the youth was ſurpriſed to find in a man, whoſe religion he had been taught to reprobate, virtues which commanded his eſteem. In the family too, domeſtic peace and good order were ſuſtained, and crowned by daily devotion; at which the youth was expected to be preſent. He was not, however, once aſked to attend at meeting; but regularly took his place in the pariſh-church. At this time he was wholly deſtitute of any concern reſpecting his eternal ſafety: he had no idea at all of his native depravity: ſuch was his ſpiritual blindneſs, that he could repeat the ten commandments every Sabbath, without once ſuſpecting that he had broken any of them, even in the thoughts or wiſhes of his heart; and, by a neceſſary conſequence, atonement by the blood of the Great Sin-Offering, and regeneration of heart by the Divine Spirit, appeared to him as doctrines of no value: he had, however, good natural ſenſe, and could perceive that the righteous is, in many inſtances, "more excellent than his neighbour."

Preſbyterian was then the general term with which an ignorant multitude thought fit to reproach almoſt all perſons of ſerious godlineſs. Amongſt theſe, the maſter of the youth was well known; and he ſhared largely the ſcourge of the perſecutor's tongue. His ſervant, who had often, in other inſtances, united in ſimilar revilings, was now convinced that his maſter, at leaſt, merited better treatment: he ſaw him upright, gentle, temperate, benevolent, and devout; and the youth ſaid to himſelf, 'Surely, a bad religion could not make ſo good a man.' This conviction wrought ſo powerfully on the mind of the ſervant, that he exceedingly wiſhed to know more perfectly what his maſter's religion was; but he had ſaid to his father, and he held his promiſe ſacred, 'I will never enter the meeting-houſe at ——.' This engagement held him to his church; but his deſire to attend, for once, where his maſter worſhipped, ſtill increaſed; and he believed he could, without a breach of promiſe, ſtand in the porch of the meeting-houſe. He did ſo. It was a ſummer's day,—the doors were opened,—the miniſter pleaded with earneſtneſs,—the youth's attention was caught,—and the arrow of conviction reached the deſtined mark. He ſaid, and it was the firſt time he had made the confeſſion, 'I am a loſt ſinner;' but he ſoon added, 'To me is the word of his ſalvation ſent.' The change in his character was ſudden, but deciſive. He had heard the voice of the good Shepherd, and could no longer be happy, whilſt excluded from his fold. As became a ſon, both dutiful and pious, he wrote to his father, ſaying, 'I faithfully regard my promiſe, not to enter the meeting-houſe

ing-houſe at ———, as the condition of my preſent reſidence; but I cannot any longer remain here, unleſs you remove that condition, and allow me to attend where, I believe, my duty to God and my eternal intereſt direct me.' On the receipt of this letter, the father, highly alarmed and enraged, commanded his ſon inſtantly to return home; yet he was obliged, out of regard to his maſter's intereſt, to ſend, for the preſent, a younger ſon in his room; from whom he exacted the ſame promiſe which he had received from his brother.

The converted youth, with mingled joy and ſorrow, now ſought the paternal roof, and met an angry parent with ſubmiſſion, and ardent prayer to God for direction in his new and trying ſituation. The next Lord's-day morning his father, ſeeing the ſon preparing to walk, inquired what was his deſign: the ſon replied, 'Father, I revere your authority; you know I have ever obeyed you; and, in one inſtance, I fear I carried that obedience too far, by placing your authority above that of my Heavenly Judge: my promiſe extended only to one place, and I am going this morning to the meeting-houſe at B——: it is the neareſt place in which I can unite with ſerious Chriſtians, and hear the doctrine which I think neceſſary to my eternal ſalvation. In this inſtance, I hope you will allow me to act for myſelf: in all others I am ſtill ready to obey your commands.'—To this addreſs the enraged father replied, 'If you go to *any meeting*, my houſe ſhall be no longer your home.' 'I hope it will,' the ſon replied, and reſpectfully withdrew. He avoided that day to ſee his father again; and the next day he ſilently reſumed his uſual occupation. But religion was now the pleaſure and buſineſs of every day to this pious youth. Often he would protract the evening-walk with a brother or a ſiſter on his arm, to whom he told, with heart-felt joy, the hope which glowed in his breaſt for another and a better world, where He dwells, who bore the curſe for guilty men. At home, the winter's evening was employed in religious converſe; and Dr. Watts' pſalmns and hymns, which he had brought with him, agreeably allured a family fond of muſic, and baniſhed from their dwelling the vain and trifling village-ſong. This change, of courſe, became the wonder and the reproach of the whole village. Had the family become abandoned to every vice, the circumſtance would probably have excited little ſurpriſe or regret; but to hear of religion on any day but Sunday was a new thing to theſe poor villagers, and as diſagreeable as it was ſtrange;—even the children at ſchool learned to revile, as they paſſed the door, the whole of the family where the heavenly ſtranger had taken up his conſtant abode.

The work was of God, and none could hinder it. In a few months the pious youth had the happineſs to diſcover a decided change

change of character in a brother, and in two of his ſiſters; and they, determining to ſhare the reproach of the croſs, accompanied their brother to his uſual place of worſhip. Frequently, on their return, they were all four of them ſhut out of doors by an offended father; and thus would have remained without ſhelter, had not their mother (a tender parent, and now become a pious one) often crept ſilently down the ſtairs, at dead of night, to re-admit her baniſhed children. The father, poor unhappy man, would have felt far leſs ſorrow in following his children to the grave, than in ſeeing them thus take their whole delight in prayer and praiſe, and holy converſe; though it was evident to all impartial obſervers, that every moral virtue, and every tender attachment to himſelf, were by their religion abundantly heightened and enlarged.—How dreadful are the effects of a deep-rooted prejudice againſt evangelical truth!

New events increaſed the unhappy father's grief, and the joy of his pious children. The ſon, who had replaced his elder brother, now informed his father that he muſt, if he ſtayed at C***, have liberty alſo to hear what he believed to be the goſpel of ſalvation.—The father replied with anger, 'you muſt uſe your own pleaſure, for I have no other ſon whom I can truſt to replace you.' Steady perſeverance gained on the father's oppoſition; he ſaw that his children, though they were dutiful to him, had learned, that "to love father or mother more than Chriſt, is to be unworthy of him." The neighbours too became leſs violent in their reproaches, when they perceived that they were patiently endured. Truth prevailed, and oppoſition gave way. The elder children carefully inſtructed the younger; all had liberty to attend ſerious and godly preachers. Devotion and a godly life ſilenced the objections of one parent, whilſt the other, together with all her ten children, evidently partook of that grace, which bringeth ſalvation.

The writer of theſe lines ſaw the aged mother about the year 1774, ſix weeks before her death; ſhe was then eighty-one; venerable in form and countenance, her dignity was that of a ſaint juſt about to commence the ſong, "Unto him that hath loved me," &c. This old diſciple retraced, in the preceding hiſtory, the dealings of God to her and hers, in a manner which fixed an indelible impreſſion on the writer's mind, though he was then but eleven years old. A few days after this interview, ſhe was admitted into the joy of her Lord.

The father, who died ſome years before, had regularly attended the means of grace with his family. One of the ſons died in youth. The other five were eſteemed and highly uſeful Chriſtians in ſeveral of the midland counties. One of the daughters is ſtill living in the county of Glouceſter, and poſſeſſes, in advanced life, all the ardent piety of her long deceaſed

parent.

parent. An immediate deſcendant of one of the younger brothers is paſtor of a Chriſtian Society within a few miles of the village of C——, and ſometimes preaches, he hopes with ſucceſs, hard by the houſe of his anceſtors, which he never views without ſaying, "Lord, I adore thy ways to bring me near to God." "Thy ways are in the great deep, and thy footſteps are not known." "Thy counſel ſhall ſtand, and thou wilt do all thy pleaſure."

The preceding narrative may lead us to reflect, 1. On the injuſtice of the charge ſo often urged againſt godly miniſters and ſerious Chriſtians, as diſturbers of the peace of ſociety. When the lamb is to be worried, the wolf wants not a pretext. Ever ſince our divine Maſter dwelt on the earth, his doctrine has excited violent oppoſition from the ignorant, the prejudiced, and the vicious; but ſhall we, on this account, cenſure Chriſtianity? As well may we blame the innocent traveller for exciting the avarice and the cruelty of the robber. In the religion of Chriſt all is meek, peaceful, and benevolent: its oppoſers render it the *occaſion* of reproach and bitter contention; but the *cauſe* of theſe evils is in themſelves; and with them will finally reſt both the blame and the puniſhment.

2. The paſtor who, in his own reſidence, or during his own life, gathers but little fruit from his labours, has often by them enriched diſtant churches and ſucceeding generations. Let miniſters recollect this in the hour of diſcouragement, nor ever decline from their Maſter's work, ſince a ſingle diſcourſe, addreſſed to an unexpected hearer, has often proved as a fountain opened to circulate the higheſt of all bleſſings through channels too numerous, complex, and extenſive, to be traced with accuracy, till knowledge ſhall be rendered complete in a better world.

3. In the commencement of a religious courſe, how neceſſary is it to unite the meekneſs of wiſdom with unbending fortitude! Had the pious ſon been deficient in meekneſs, he might have fled his father's houſe, or have violently reſented the harſh treatment which he received. On the other hand, without fortitude to ſuſtain perſecution, he would have reſigned, to preſent intereſt and eaſe, all the unſpeakable advantages and conſolations of religion; but combining theſe virtues, though the trial was hard, the reſult was happy.

4. Let it not be forgotten, that the holy life and gentle manners of a pious maſter firſt ſilenced, in his ſervant, objections to religion, and then induced him to attend a goſpel miniſtry. Too often, we fear, is this caſe reverſed; and thus the way of truth is evil ſpoken of. God will eſtabliſh the work of our hands upon us; and religion will abundantly proſper when

thoſe

thoſe who avow its intereſts ſhall alſo diſplay its excellencies in their habitual conduct, and thus become "living epiſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, known and read of all men." NEPOS.

For the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine.

ON MISAPPLICATION OF SCRIPTURE.

I AM pleaſed when I hear Scriptures adduced in prayer, ſermons, or in religious converſation, according to the apparent meaning of the Holy Ghoſt. But when texts are uſed in a different ſenſe from what they bear in their connexion, it excites feelings, which tend to the injury of devotion. We readily grant, that no writer ſhould be quoted differently from his own ſenſe and meaning. Authors are not pleaſed to ſee or hear their words turned from their plain and original deſign. Is this accuracy, in juſtice, due to fellow-creatures? Then ſurely, we ought to cite the Holy Scriptures with accuracy, and due attention. *If any man ſpeak, let him ſpeak as the Oracles of God.*

As a ſpecimen of the many texts, which are often miſapplied, I will mention a few inſtances.

Many religious perſons, when conſidering themſelves near the cloſe of life, have been heard to repeat theſe words, *Why is his chariot ſo long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?* They are found Judges v. 28. No one can read the words underſtandingly, in that excellent ſong of Deborah and Barak, and not admire their beauty. But what is their ſubject? They repreſent Siſera's mother looking out at a window impatiently waiting for the return of her ſon, loaded with the rich ſpoils of God's covenant people. The words, in their connexion, expreſs the preſumption, the vanity, and the pride of her heart. God was not in her thoughts. Is it not improper thus to miſapply the ſacred text, and uſe it in a ſenſe very different from its original meaning? Chriſtians are not reduced to the neceſſity of ſuch habitual miſapplication for the want of ſuitable portions of Scripture; for there is a great variety of other expreſſions, in God's word, peculiarly adapted to the feelings of gracious perſons, in the ſolemn circumſtances of dying.

Natural death is often perſonified by the King of Terrors; and many apparently good people are in the habit of expreſſing themſelves as though it was a revealed truth, that death is the king of terrors both to the ſaint, and to the ſinner. From repreſentations frequently made, the attentive youth receives this impreſſion, and he receives it juſtly, that even to the real Chriſtian,

tian, nothing is ſo terrible as death. But, is this ſentiment taught in the Oracles of God? In Job xviii. 14, we read an affecting deſcription, which the inſpired Bildad gave of the wicked man; and among other things he ſaid, *His confidence.....It ſhall bring him to the king of terrors.* In the ſame paragraph, a reaſon for this aſſertion is expreſſed: *His own counſel ſhall caſt him down.* It is aſked, How is the upright and godly character implied in this threatening? The words are appropriated expreſsly to *the wicked*, to *him that knoweth not God.* There is no doubt but that death may be the king of terrors to thoſe on whom *the wrath of God abideth*, and who die in their ſins. But it appears inaccurate and unjuſt to apply the words to *the faithful in Chriſt Jeſus, who die in the Lord*, and for whom *to die is gain.* It is deſirable that all thoſe diſtinctions ſhould be obſerved that the Holy Ghoſt hath made, between the righteous and the wicked.

There are religious perſons who generally have theſe petitions in their form of prayer; "Lift thou up the light of thy reconciled countenance upon us," and "Be thou a reconciled God unto us." Are we ſupported by the Scriptures, in making ſuch requeſts? Do theſe petitions agree with the feelings of a *broken Spirit and a contrite heart?* We have no doubt but that it is the deſire of the ſinner's heart, when concerned for his ſoul, that God would be reconciled to him. The ſelf-juſtifying tranſgreſſor, in maintaining his controverſy againſt the heavens, would have God come down to his terms. But, muſt God be reconciled to the ſinner? Is God to acknowledge that his ways are unequal? Is God to recede from his holy law that the ſinner may be happy? The uniform language of Divine Revelation is to this point, *Be ye reconciled to God.* And when the heart is reconciled, then there is peace, contention with God ceaſes, Jeſus Chriſt is precious to the ſoul, and the convert has joy unſpeakable. The prayer in Pſalm iv. 6, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us*, expreſſes no idea of this kind, that God would be reconciled to us. It implies, however, an heart reconciled to God, and earneſtly ſupplicating the Divine preſence. In ſuch a frame of ſpirit, the diſciple of Chriſt prays, "Manifeſt thyſelf unto us."

Iſa. lxiii. 3, is often introduced as referring to the ſufferings of our bleſſed Saviour. *I have trodden the wine preſs alone, and of the people there was none with me; for I will tread them in mine anger*, &c. Whoever reads theſe words, attentively, with the context, will ſee reaſons to believe that it is a prophecy yet to be fulfilled. The paragraph evidently looks forward to that great and glorious period, when Jeſus Chriſt will render vengeance to his adverſaries, when he will daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel, and ſtain his raiment with their blood. When *the year of his Redeemed is come*, there will be ſuch manifeſtations of his power

power both in the deſtruction of his enemies, and in the protection of his little flock, that He *alone* will be exalted as his people's Deliverer. Rev. xix. 13—16, furniſhes a key to this prophecy. Here the Holy Ghoſt explains what was ſaid, in the prophetic words under conſideration; and we contemplate Him, in proſpect, whoſe name is called *the Word of God*, ſmiting the nations, and heading *the wine preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God.*

That familiar Scripture in Hoſea iv. 17, *Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone,* has been often miſapplied. From the connexion in which the words are commonly uſed, people receive the idea that God is here addreſſing the Holy Spirit, and directing him to let hardened ſinners alone, to ſtrive no more with them. By attending to what goes before, and what follows the text, the beſt way of acquiring a true underſtanding of God's word, we ſee reaſons for believing a different ſentiment here taught. The Lord by his prophet is ſpeaking to Judah, and warning him not to be meddling with the idolatries of Ephraim. In clear view of the abominations committed by Iſrael, the ten tribes, who are repreſented by Ephraim, God warned Judah in theſe words: *Yet let not Judah offend, and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven*, for there Jeroboam and his ſucceſſors ſacrificed to the golden calves. As if the Lord had ſaid, *Ephraim is joined to idols;* Judah, my word to you is this, *Let him alone.* "Be not converſant with him, in his abominations. It is your duty to tarry at Jeruſalem, to inquire in the temple, and to be ſteadfaſt in my covenant." In this text, it is conceived, the Lord ſolemnly warns all his people againſt aſſociating with the ungodly world, in their ſins, parallel with that direction in 2 Cor. vi. 17, *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate, ſaith the Lord.*

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER,

Dated Manchеſter, Vermont, Auguſt 20, 1804, *from Mr. A.* FARLEY.

"THERE has been, Sir, a very remarkable time of divine power in this quarter: a great ſhaking among the dry bones, and as we have reaſon to believe, a great ſpiritual reſurrection. Since the commencement of the late revival there have been added to the church in Fair-Haven, about twenty-five; Weybridge, twenty; Manchеſter, twelve; Sudbury, ten; Shoreham, fifteen; Poultney, fifteen; Hubbardſton, twenty-five; Addiſon, thirty-five; Budport, fifty; Orwell, twenty-eight; Benſon, one hundred and twenty-five; Pittsford, one

hundred and twelve; Rutland, one hundred and twenty-five; Tenmouth, fifty; Rupert, eighty-five; Dorſet, ninety-three; Sandgate, fifty-ſix; Pawlet, fifteen; Bennington, one hundred and twelve; Hebron, about fifty. The work is ſtill going on in Hebron, Rupert, and I hope in this town. In about eighteen months, within about ſeventy miles in length and twenty in breadth, about one thouſand ſouls have become hopeful converts to the truth as it is in Jeſus. Truly it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

A WALK OF USEFULNESS,

A WEEK BEFORE THE WORLD'S END.

ONE day, muſing in my little parlour, my thoughts were carried forward to the laſt week of the world's exiſtence. I ſuppoſed this circumſtance to be known only to myſelf, and that all things were in the ſame ſtate they are now. I determined to walk into London, to do all the good I poſſibly could. On my way I overheard a drayman ſwearing at a neighbour who had offended him. I touched him on the ſhoulder, and whiſpered in his ear, that the Son of God would call him to account for his ſwearing, and for all his conduct, in the courſe of the week; and therefore adviſed him to prepare to meet his Judge. The man, at firſt, was remarkably ſtruck with this uncommon and unexpected ſalutation. He then turned to his neighbours, ſaying, "What think you this man has been telling me? He ſays, the Judge of men is to be here in a week." Some laughed; another ſaid, "Wo be to me if he be here ſo ſoon, for I've been a wicked fellow."—Another ſaid, "It is all a farce; let us mind our work:" and away they went.

I walked on; but paſſing a public houſe, and hearing a number of people ſinging over a pot of porter, I returned, and ſtepped into the houſe. Inquiring what they were about,—with an oath, one replied, "We are making ourſelves merry with a little beer, Sir." 'Now, do not count me rude,' ſaid I, 'when I aſk, Have all of you been ſorry for your ſins yet?—has ever that coſt you a ſerious thought?' "Not much," replied they all, with a ſmile. 'It is time, high time, that every one of you think ſeriouſly upon that matter, and how your ſins may be pardoned, for the Judge is at the door; and when he cometh he will bring every man to his bar, to anſwer for his deeds, whether good or bad.' One man, who appeared more ſerious than the others, requeſted me to inform them how a ſinner could

could be saved; "for," said he, "I was once thinking a good deal about these things, but people told me I was turning Methodist; and I did not like that, Sir; and so I thought no more of the matter." 'Believe,' said I, 'as poor sinners, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Son of God and Saviour of sinners, and ye shall be saved.' I desired them also, when their work was over, to run to their Bibles, and there they would find full instruction about things of the last importance for them to know. Upon this I left them, hastening to the chief concourse of people, I mean the Royal Exchange. Here I found hundreds anxiously occupied about the affairs of this life. I stood upon a chair, that I might be seen by all; and, with a loud voice, requested silence and attention for a few minutes, which the novelty of the circumstance soon obtained; when I spoke to the following purport:

'Gentlemen, unless I had a matter of the utmost consequence to communicate, I could not have had the boldness to interrupt your business in this public way. You must, no doubt, be expecting that I am to convey important intelligence respecting the war in which we are engaged. I may say your conjecture, in one sense, is just, for it certainly shall be finished this week; but when you have heard the whole, I am sure that the intelligence will make no impression on the funds; for the funds shall also terminate with time. The end of all things is at hand! The Judge is now on his throne of grace, but he leaves it on Sunday next for a throne of judgment: wherefore I solemnly call upon every man present to consider his ways, to turn to the Lord and he shall live, and welcome the Lord at his coming. But if you do not, you shall be thrust from the presence of the Lord into the prison of perdition,—there to bewail your folly forever and ever. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Hearken, ye stout-hearted and far from righteousness, God has brought near to you the righteousness of his Son; and if you receive it, his salvation shall not tarry: you shall instantly enter upon the enjoyment of it!'

This speech made a powerful impression upon many present: not that they believed the world would be ended so soon as I had predicted,—but it led their attention to events which must come some time or other.

Leaving the Exchange, I proceeded to visit a Christian family who resided in the neighbourhood. I shook hands, and inquired if they had heard the good news. "No!" said they, "What news?" 'The Lord is at hand; the Heavens shall only retain him till Sabbath morning.' One said, "Charming! but I fear it is too good news to be true—shall I be delivered from this frail, sinful body, on Sabbath! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!"—A second added, "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus;

ſus; I have waited for thy ſalvation.—But how do you know the Lord is to be here ſo ſoon?" 'An angel told me ſo,' ſaid I, 'laſt night.' A third perſon preſent called out, "O Sirs, it is well with you, indeed! but it makes me tremble! O what ſhall I do to be ſaved?" 'Remember the old anſwer,' replied I, 'Believe in the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.' Light attended this faithful ſaying, for the youth was enabled to believe in the perfect ſacrifice of Jeſus; and was immediately as happy as any of us. Then we all ſat down and ſung, "Lo, he comes, with clouds deſcending," &c. After concluding our hymn we compared our feelings on the occaſion, and found that the proſpect of Chriſt's near approach completely baniſhed from our minds all ſin; and the tempter ſeemed to have no power over us. What fools we have been, not to be daily looking for the coming of the Lord, and thus to have lived conſtantly under the powers of the world to come!

In the evening I returned home, telling every paſſenger I met on my way to prepare for the coming of the Lord. Moſt of the night I ſpent in prayer to God, beſeeching him to make quick work with thouſands,—to create nations of believers in one day.

Next day, I found the news had ſpread all over the metropolis. Anxiety ſeemed viſible in almoſt every countenance; prayers were heard from almoſt every houſe I paſſed; buſineſs ſeemed quite at a ſtand. The joy that I had on beholding theſe things I cannot expreſs; at the ſame time it was frequently damped by ſhocking ſcenes which preſented themſelves to me: many had drank to intoxication to baniſh thought. From bills paſted up, I found that the public amuſements were greatly multiplied, in order to divert the public attention from impending ruin. This reminded me of the ſtate of the old world when Noah entered the ark, who were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage the very day when their deſtruction commenced.

I called at a houſe where an old Chriſtian had been confined upwards of ten years to a ſick bed. Said I, 'John, have you heard the good news?' "O yes, good news it is to me;" the day of my releaſe is at hand; long have I looked for his appearing: and ſometimes, when in great agony, have I ſaid to my deareſt Lord, "Why are thy chariot-wheels ſo long of coming?" but I find that He who ſhall come will come, and will not tarry. The moment his trumpet ſhall ſound, I ſhall ſtart up, and, aſcending to my Lord and your Lord, I ſhall leave death and the grave forever behind me.'

In this way was I employed till Sabbath morning about the dawn, when ſuddenly the Heavens were opened, and their glorious contents manifeſted. The Saviour appeared, clothed with

with light as with a garment, attended with myriads of angels, and myriads of glorified men, with palms of victory in their hands. Every eye was fixed on Jesus. Millions of ungodly men sought for hiding-places, but none could be found. Angelic knowledge found them out, and angelic powers compelled them to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. Here they were arraigned, capitally convicted of treason against the Lord, and condemned to suffer unutterable misery forever and ever. The scene now became inconceivably awful. Two innumerable divisions of mankind on the eve of parting, to see each other no more, no, not forever and ever.

The scene closed with Christ's commanding the wicked to depart from his presence. He had no sooner said Depart, than they immediately disappeared; and the righteous, by his kind invitation, went into life eternal.

HEMAN.

To the Editors of the M. Missionary Magazine.

Gentlemen,

By inserting the following Queries in your instructive publication, you will oblige a constant reader.

DISCIPULUS.

QUERIES.

Query 1. WHAT are the two immutable things mentioned in Hebrews vi. 18.?—"*That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*"

Query 2. What is the meaning of the passage in 1 Kings xix. 12.?—"*And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.*"

Query 3. What is the meaning of the passage in 1 Corinthians iv. 7.?—"*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*"

Query 4. What are we to understand by Judges xviii. 5, 6.?—"*And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous. And the priest said unto them, Go in peace: before the Lord is your way wherein ye go.*" Was the true God inquired of? If he was, and gave an answer of peace, did he not countenance idolatry?

Query

Query 5. Suppoſe a perſon deſires admiſſion into a church, and they all from A to Y are ſatisfied, but Z can get no evidence that the proponent has ever ſeen the plague of his own heart: What ſhall Z do?

Query 6. Suppoſe a perſon deſires to commune occaſionally with a church, and they are all willing to admit him to ſuch communion, but one member, who is diſſatisfied with him on account of ſome immorality: What courſe of conduct ought to be purſued in ſuch a caſe?

A REQUEST.

A CONSTANT reader of this uſeful work, requeſts that he may ſee in the Maſſachuſetts Miſſionary Magazine, a plain and familiar explanation of the Prophet Micaiah's words to Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 19—23. "*And he ſaid, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: I ſaw the Lord ſitting on his throne, and all the hoſt of heaven ſtanding by him on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord ſaid, Who ſhall perſuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one ſaid on this manner, and another ſaid on that manner. And there came forth a ſpirit, and ſtood before the Lord, and ſaid, I will perſuade him. And the Lord ſaid unto him, Wherewith? And he ſaid, I will go forth, and I will be a lying ſpirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he ſaid, Thou ſhalt perſuade him, and prevail alſo: go forth, and do ſo. Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying ſpirit in the mouth of all theſe thy prophets, and the Lord hath ſpoken evil concerning thee.*"

IN the Memoir of C. Townſend, Eſq. we have the following ſentence:—"He had formerly tried his fortune repeatedly in the lottery, in expectation of a large prize; but he made it the conſtant matter of his prayer that he might never have one, without a heart to uſe it to the glory of God." Your correſpondent will feel highly obliged by a reply to the following queries:—"Is it lawful for Chriſtians to adventure in lotteries?—Is it a commendable practice?—Is it what a Chriſtian miniſter ſhould countenance or blame? or ſhould he leave it as a matter wholly indifferent?"

AS it is the unavoidable lot of ſome tradeſmen, eſpecially in travelling on buſineſs, to be obliged to aſſociate with ungodly men, it is an inquiry of much importance,—*How may a profeſſing Chriſtian beſt defend himſelf againſt the danger of evil company?* An anſwer to this, by ſome of your judicious Correſpondents, eſpecially by one who knows the danger by *experience*, will be highly acceptable to A TRAVELLER.

DISPLAY OF GOD's GOODNESS,

IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

"What various hind'rances we meet
"In coming to a mercy seat!
"Yet who that knows the worth of prayer,
"But wishes to be often there!" COWPER.

To ——

SIR,

I WAS lately ſpending an evening at the houſe of a particular friend, where a circumſtance was related by an old lady, who was one of the company, which I thought worthy of particular attention, and which, if your ſentiments concur with mine, you will perhaps conſider as deſerving a place in your uſeful Miſcellany. It is a fact, which is not perhaps generally known, that Dr. Joſeph Stennet, the father of the late Dr. Samuel Stennet, though he received an excellent education by the care of his father, from his ignorance of trade, and the diffidence he felt on entering on the public miniſtry, was, in the early part of life, engaged as a clerk in ſome manufactory at Abergavenny (I think in the iron trade). During his reſidence at this place, a poor man, whoſe buſineſs it was to prepare charcoal for the manufactory, was, by a heavy fall of ſnow (a circumſtance very common in that mountainous country) prevented from purſuing his uſual occupation, and reduced to a ſtate of the utmoſt diſtreſs. His ſtock of proviſions was entirely expended; the ſnow rendered it impoſſible for him to repair to the neighbouring village; and his children were crying for bread. In this dreadful exigency he acted the part of a Chriſtian: he retired to his chamber, and poured out his heart to God, earneſtly entreating, either that he would remove the craving appetites of his children, or afford him the means of ſatisfying their wants. Soon after his return from prayer, the children went quietly to bed; and about three o'clock in the morning he was rouſed from his repoſe by a knocking at his door: upon opening which he found a perſon on horſeback, who ſaid he was ſent by a Mr. Jones, who reſided in the neighbourhood, with a ſack of proviſions. The good man was not curious to inquire into circumſtances, but conſidered the event as a peculiar interpoſition of Providence in anſwer to prayer. He recollected, however, having occaſionally converſed with a gentleman of that name (a Preſbyterian) whom he had ſometimes met with as he was going to meeting. Mr. Stennet, knowing that the man was in low circumſtances, when he had

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an opportunity of ſeeing him again at the manufactory, inquired how he had fared during the ſeverity of the ſeaſon; when the good man informed him of the circumſtances which I have now related.

Some time after, as Mr. Stennet was ſtanding by an inn, in the town, a gentleman rode up to the door, whom the landlord accoſted by the name of Jones. He was immediately ſtruck with the idea, that this was the perſon who had been the inſtrument of ſupplying the wants of the poor man; and, upon inquiry, found his conjecture verified. He retired with the gentleman into the inn; and was there informed of the peculiar circumſtances which led to the above tranſaction. Mr. Jones told him that he had been meditating on the goodneſs of God towards himſelf, till he felt his gratitude riſe to a higher pitch than uſual, and immediately reſolved to do what he could to promote the end of his creation, the glory of God. He retired to bed, fell aſleep, and dreamed that the poor man, whom I have juſt mentioned, was in diſtreſſed circumſtances, and his children in want of bread. At the ſame time a voice ſeemed to ſay, "Help the poor collier." He therefore determined to ſend him aſſiſtance on the morrow. He went to ſleep again; and again the dream, as well as the admonition, was repeated; and he again formed the ſame reſolution. The ſame circumſtances were reiterated a third time: upon which he aroſe from his bed, took a ſack, filled it with whatever eatables he could find, and diſpatched a ſervant on horſeback with them to the poor man's houſe. Thus did God anſwer the prayer of the deſtitute, and appeared a preſent help in time of need. From the knowledge I have of the relator of the above circumſtance, I have no reaſon to doubt the authenticity of the tale; and hope it may be the means of encouraging the afflicted amongſt the Lord's people to truſt in him at all times, and pour out their hearts before him. I am, dear Sir,

Yours in the bonds of the goſpel,

J. D.

EXPERIENCE OF P. R.

WHEN I was young, the death of my father ſeriouſly impreſſed my mind. It appeared to be a call that came exceedingly cloſe to me, to be prepared for death! But I was afraid to think of it; the language of my trembling heart was, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a more convenient ſeaſon I will attend to the one thing needful, but at preſent it is too gloomy;" and I began to make an excuſe. This paſſage

of

of ſcripture would often occur to my mind, "be ye alſo ready;" but with all the reſolution in my power I ſtrove to baniſh the idea far from me. I tho't I would meditate on divine things and prepare myſelf for death when old. I had ſeveral checks of conſcience, but ſtill I reſiſted every ſoft invitation; and my heart would ſay, "what have I to do with thee? I beſeech thee torment me not."

After ſome time I loſt thoſe ſerious reflections, and truſted in my own ſtrength, and reſted ſecure. On being alarmed at a very ſudden death of a young perſon, it convinced me *I* muſt die; I found I never before believed, *I* ſhould die *myſelf*. Shocked at the tho't, I looked to the right hand and to the left for a way to eſcape, but, alas! a dreadful ſound was in my ears. "You muſt die—you are not prepared—you are not ready—and yet you muſt die;" nor could I get free from theſe dreadful ideas. Surpriſed at a heart full of enmity to God; and ſunk at a ſenſe of my guilt, in this diſtreſs of mind, I knew not what to do. Yet in compliance with my promiſe that I would attend, and as I was yet ſpared alive, and taking ſome encouragement from theſe words, "aſk and ye ſhall receive," I tho't I could do ſomething acceptable; but in the attempt, I found I could do nothing. All my righteouſneſs became as filthy rags; ſtript naked, I had nothing to offer to atone for my ſins. My heart was in direct rebellion againſt my Maker, and I began to accuſe him of being a hard Maſter, "reaping where he had not ſown, and gathering where he had not ſtrawed!" In this agitation of mind I could not ſee myſelf to be blamed. That the Lord was no reſpecter of perſons, and yet had elected ſome to everlaſting life, was quite myſterious and dark; nor could I ſee the conſiſtency of God's dealings towards mankind, and yet be ſtyled a juſt God. Not willing the Lord ſhould know the awful language of my heart, in the extreme anguiſh of my mind, I could not endure the all ſeeing eye of my Judge. Although held bound in his hands, yet with the ſtrongeſt efforts imaginable I ſtrove to get out of his hands, and ſcreen myſelf from his preſence! Not willing the Lord ſhould rule, fain would I have dethroned him, and have taken the reins of government in my own hands; ſaying, "I will not have this man to reign over me." In this outrageous oppoſition of heart, a ſecret ſomething, beyond my utmoſt faculty to deſcribe or conceive, broke in on my mind: ſoft as the gentle breath of zephyrs, it whiſpered peace to my ſoul. I was huſhed—my eyes were opened—I found it was *I myſelf* that was in the fault. That which was *once*

dark, was then opened plain to my view. Struck dumb—I could not open my mouth, in my own defence. I ſaw that I was juſtly condemned, nor could I expect mercy. It cannot be juſt in God, thought I, to pardon ſo great a ſinner! If I was caſt into miſery, I tho't I could praiſe him forever. I could not ſpeak, for it appeard to me I was a child. Helpleſs as an infant, weary and heavy laden, I ſunk in the arms of Chriſt to be entirely at his diſpoſal. If I was loſt, I tho't it would be more for the glory of God, therefore I could acquieſce in it with entire reſignation, "even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight." Here I found I reſted ſweetly, as babes ſleep in the arms of parents. Theſe words came to my mind, "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the iſles be glad thereof." They were words of conſolation to me. I wondered at the ſerenity of my mind, and thought I was left to myſelf becauſe I had grieved the heavenly Dove. Sometimes I had a faint hope that my peace was made with God, but when I conſidered the tree was known by its fruits, and the heart was deceitful, I tho't I had no grounds for hope. Since that, I have cheriſhed a thought that the Lord has been pleaſed to enlighten my ſoul, and I hope and truſt I have had conſolation and joy unſpeakable. In view of profeſſing religion, theſe words came to my mind, "He that is aſhamed of me, of him will the Son of man be aſhamed"—"He that knoweth his Maſter's will, and doth it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes"—"Now alſo the ax is laid unto the root of the tree."

I ardently deſire to be enabled to do whatever appears to be duty. Weak and frail as I am, fain would I beg to be reckoned as one of the hired ſervants, not worthy to be conſidered as one of the children. While I live may I enjoy your prayers.

R. P.

Diſtrict of Maine, Sept. 1804.

NEW

NEW YEAR's DAY REFLECTIONS.

HAVING obtained help of God, I continue to this day. The year paſt I have had clearer views of the wonderful condeſcenſion of the Lamb of God, in his incarnation, and in the aſſumption of a human ſoul, our holy brother, into union with the uncreated, eternal Word, the ſecond perſon of the adorable Trinity. A moſt venerable myſtery!

I have, this day, been reviewing the ſeries of the divine goodneſs to me, ever ſince my birth. How graciouſly hath my heavenly Father dealt with me! Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul! and forget not all his benefits. God hath ſo ordered, that I have ſpent my life, from my earlieſt youth, among books; but the moſt valuable knowledge, which I have obtained, is not the mathematical and philoſophical ſciences; not the ancient learned languages; not eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and the hiſtory of nations and empires; not the knowledge of law, and the political conſtitutions of Europe:—but that, in which I have found the greateſt entertainment and ſatisfaction, is, the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt, and the redemption of the croſs. The ſacred oracles open the moſt wonderful diſcoveries, and enlarged views, of the auguſt councils of infinite wiſdom and grace. Through the blood of the croſs, Jeſus has laid the foundation of our reconciliation, and union alſo, to the Divinity. Glorious ſalvation this! God manifeſt in the fleſh, ſeen of angels, taken up to glory. Of the bleſſed Jeſus I am an unworthy miniſter. O that I could ſerve him equal to his deſerts from man! But, alas! what little fervour have I, in the ſervice of ſo glorious a Maſter! When I review my miniſtry, it has been ſo poor and mean, ſo ſelfiſh, ſo unfaithful, ſo little animated with the ſpirit and great cauſe of Chriſt, ſo filled with neglect, ill conduct, and imperfection, that I bluſh to think of a reward from a Maſter, to whom I owe my all; and can think of nothing but of going to receive (if I can eſcape rebuke) mercy and forgiveneſs only, if poſſible, for doing his work ſo poorly. The good Lord pardon me for Jeſus' ſake; and lay not iniquity to my charge. O that I may be quickened by his grace, and enlivened in ſo glorious a work, as teſtifying the grace of God to a ſinful world, the remaining moments of my life! I rejoice that God ſo ordered it in his providence, that I was put into the miniſtry;

miniſtry: I delight in the ſervice—But ſhudder at the thoughts of the reckoning. This accounting for the blood of ſouls, laid to the charge of an ungracious, an unfaithful miniſtry, is awful and tremendous. In the view of this, O Jeſus! I fly to thy holy ſacrifice, thy all-atoning blood. May I be reſolved, more and more, to ſtand in the lot aſſigned, not in my own weakneſs, but in the ſtrength of thy grace, without which I am, and ſhall be, nothing. Direct my miniſtrations, and give efficacy to them; that, teſtifying repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I may perſuade at leaſt ſome few of this world of millions of rebels to be reconciled to God.

When I review my life, from my earlieſt years to this day, I find it filled with the care, protection and goodneſs of Heaven—filled with infirmities of body and mind—filled with imperfection and ſin. My ſins are ſo numerous, ſo conſtant, ſo prevailing, and ſo uncontrollable, that I am covered with remorſe and confuſion. I know that the atonement and merits of my Redeemer are all-ſufficient; and ſo they are for all the miſerable in hell. But, the imperfections, follies, and iniquities of my life, and of my very heart, excite in me great doubts and fears, leſt I ſhall prove a caſt-away. I keep up, indeed, a conſtant, daily, and unremitted courſe of prayer, reading of the Scriptures, meditation, and mental devotion; and am habitually ſeeking God's grace, and energetic influence, to enlighten and ſanctify me. But, alas! how little progreſs do I make in religion!

INTERESTING INCIDENT.

ON the evening that the Hottentots were in the Scots Church, in Swallow Street, a negro boy, about fifteen years old, anxious to ſee the converts to Chriſtianity from his quarter of the world, of whom every body was ſpeaking, preſſed through the crowd, and, at length, reached the veſtry-door. The ſervice had cloſed; and the Hottentots were taking a little wine with the miniſter and friends, who were ſtanding around them. The moment that Mary's eye caught the face of the boy, ſhe flew to him, took him eagerly to her arms, fondled over him with much maternal affection; and Martha having now come forward, they put ſome queſtions to him in Dutch, repeated them again and again with great earneſtneſs of manner, and

ſeemed

ſeemed much diſappointed at his giving them no anſwer. Recollecting, at laſt, that the lad did not underſtand Dutch, Mary haſtened to her miniſter, Mr. Kicherer, brought him to the boy, requeſting him to put the queſtion to him in Engliſh. He did ſo. The queſtion which they had, with ſo much concern, been addreſſing to the negro boy, was, "Do you love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? Do you love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt?"—The poor boy who, may be, had heard little of Jeſus Chriſt, ſave in the blaſphemies of nominal profeſſors, looked blank, confuſed, and gave no anſwer. Their mortification was extreme; their countenances fell; they were grieved to find a native of Africa, who had enjoyed the privileges of this country, unacquainted with the Redeemer.—Reader, thou haſt long enjoyed theſe ſpiritual privileges! How ſtands thy heart affected to the Son of God?—Liſten to the following awful words, as if ſeven thunders uttered their voices:—"If any man love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be *anathema maranatha.*"

WORLDLY ATTACHMENTS UNNECESSARY.

IT is reported by the Rabbinical writers, that Melchiſedec, being warned of God to build a houſe for himſelf, for that he had yet 500 years to live,—anſwered, That for ſo ſhort a time it was not worth the labour.

Whether this ſtory be true or falſe, we may learn from it the exceſſive folly of modern worldlings, who muſt calculate their lives, not by hundreds of years,—but by the day, by the ſpan, by the inch, and yet are as ſolicitous about worldly matters, as if they were ſure of ages to come!

"Lord! make me to know mine end, and the meaſure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am!"

ANECDOTE.

THE Goſpel having been ſent, by Lady Huntingdon's influence, to a place of public reſort, it pleaſed God to bring nearly all the domeſtic ſervants of a noble perſonage under ſerious

ſerious impreſſions. Their converſion was not merely to opinions; they lived under the influence of the goſpel, and became diſtinguiſhed for their exemplary conduct and zealous endeavours to promote the ſalvation of their neighbours. Their noble maſter was jeered by ſome of the company, upon the revolution which had taken place among his ſervants by a change of their religion. His Lordſhip replied, "As to the change of their religion, or what their religious ſentiments are, I cannot tell; but one thing I know, that ſince they have changed their religion, they have been much better ſervants, and ſhall meet with no oppoſition from me."—How happy is it for hearers and profeſſors of the goſpel, when their good conduct puts to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh ſpeakers!

BLASPHEMOUS ABUSE OF SCRIPTURE.

A REPROOF to thoſe who lightly and irreverently make uſe of Scripture-phraſes in common converſation may be of uſe. This ſhould be reſtrained in time, or perſons may go as far as a wretch in the iſland of Jerſey did. He was a notorious drunkard,—he would often drink half a pint of neat Holland's at a time, and with theſe words in his mouth:—"Be not drunk with wine, wherein is exceſs, but be filled with the *Spirit*." On other occaſions, when drinking off a ſmall glaſs, he would profanely quote theſe words: "Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe *little* ones." I mention this ſad inſtance, to warn others againſt perverting and abuſing that ſacred book, which is able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation.

The Inattentive Worſhipper.

"MYRTILLA does, 'tis true, repair
Each Sabbath to the houſe of pray'r;
So far we may commend.
But to be ſeen is all her care;
Myrtilla may the trouble ſpare,—
Her portrait let her ſend.

POETRY.

THE HIDING PLACE.

"*The Hiding Place, I am informed, was occaſioned by an incident in our revolutionary war. A Britiſh officer, in the time of an engagement, ſecreted himſelf under a bridge to avoid the danger to which he was expoſed; and when in that ſituation, or ſoon afterwards, found our bleſſed Redeemer as his ſure* HIDING PLACE. *Theſe lines were written by a poor, unfortunate, but pious man, of but a common education, who, after this event, became acquainted with the officer. I know the writer, he is ſtill living, and an object of charity. His parents I well knew. They were poor, but pious; his mother eminently ſo. She died like a Chriſtian in the full hope of eternal glory.*"

Extract of a Letter from a worthy Correspondent.

I.

HAIL ſovereign love, which firſt began
A ſcheme to reſcue fallen man!
Hail matchleſs, free, eternal grace,
Which gave my ſoul a Hiding Place!

II.

Againſt the *God*, who rules the ſky,
I fought with hands uplifted high:
Deſpis'd the manſions of his grace,
Too proud to ſeek a Hiding Place.

III.

Enwrapt in dark Egyptian night,
And fond of darkneſs more than light,
Madly I ran the ſinful race,
Secure without a Hiding Place.

IV.

When, lo! the eternal counſels ran,
Almighty grace, arreſt *that* man:
I felt the arrows of diſtreſs,
And found I had no Hiding Place.

Vindictive

v.

Vindictive juſtice ſtood in view;
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew;
But juſtice cry'd, with frowning face,
This mountain is no Hiding Place.

vi.

Then, lo! a heav'nly voice I heard,
And mercy's Angel ſoon appear'd,
Who led me, on a pleaſing pace,
To *Jeſus* as my Hiding Place.

vii.

On him eternal vengeance fell,
Which muſt have ſunk a world to hell;
He bore it for the choſen race;
And thus became their Hiding Place.

viii.

Should ſeven-fold ſtorms and thunders roll,
And ſhake the globe from pole to pole;
No thunder bolts can daunt my face;
For *Jeſus* is my Hiding Place.

ix.

A few more rolling ſeas, at moſt,
Will land me on fair Canaan's coaſt:
There I ſhall ſing redeeming grace,
And ſee my glorious Hiding Place.